

## **Amendments to the Claims**

### **Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (currently amended). A protective cap assembly for a sharps device, comprising:

a receiver for rigidly holding a sharps element of the sharps device;

a protective cap assembly attached to said receiver and completely encasing the sharps element in a closed position of the cap assembly, said cap assembly having a forward end formed with a guide for said sharps element , said guide having a conical entry segment and a substantially cylindrical stabilization segment substantially corresponding to a diameter of the sharps element;

said receiver being movably disposed in said protective cap assembly, for movement from the closed position to , and locking in, a first functional position in which the sharps element projects through said needle guide and from said protective cap assembly and the sharps device is in a first functional condition and to a second functional position in which the sharps element projects from said protective cap with a length different from a projection length in the first functional position, and from the functional position to the closed position in which the sharps element is completely retracted in said protective cap assembly.

Claim 2 (original). The assembly according to claim 1, wherein said protective cap assembly includes a clip ring and a protective cap attached to said clip ring, and wherein said clip ring is configured to limit a movement of said receiver in one

direction and said cap is configured to limit the movement of said receiver in another direction.

Claim 3 (currently amended). The assembly according to claim 2, wherein said receiver has a tab formed on a substantially cylindrical jacket surface thereof, and said protective cap assembly is formed with at least one groove in an inner jacket surface thereof, defining a track within which said tab slides from the locked position to the first functional position and a track within which said tab slides to the second functional position.

Claim 4 (original). The assembly according to claim 1, wherein the sharps device is a syringe and the sharps element is a hypodermic needle.

Claim 5 (currently amended). A needle cap assembly for a syringe having a distal end and a hypodermic needle projecting from the distal end, the needle cap assembly comprising:

a receiver rigidly mountable at the distal end and rigidly holding the hypodermic needle;

a protective cap mounted on said receiver and slidable ~~relative to~~ over said receiver between a closed position in which the protective cap encases the hypodermic needle completely and a plurality of functional positions ~~position~~ in which the hypodermic needle projects out of said protective cap, said cap assembly having a forward end formed with a needle guide for said hypodermic needle; and

mutually cooperating locking devices on said protective cap and on said receiver for locking said protective cap in the closed position and in any of the plurality of functional positions.

Claim 6 (currently amended). The needle cap assembly according to claim 5, wherein said protective cap has a tip formed with an opening through which the needle projects in the functional position, and a membrane covering and substantially sealing said opening when the protective cap is in the closed position and the needle is completely retracted inside said cap, said membrane being formed of a material configured to close the opening after the needle is pulled back from a functional position to the closed position.

Claim 7 (original). The needle cap assembly according to claim 5, which comprises a clip ring connected with said protective cap, and wherein said clip ring is configured to limit a movement of said receiver in one direction and said protective cap is configured to limit the movement of said receiver in another direction.

Claim 8 (original). The needle cap assembly according to claim 7, wherein said receiver has a tab formed on a substantially cylindrical jacket surface thereof, and said protective cap is formed with at least one groove in an inner jacket surface thereof, defining a track within which said tab slides from the locked position to the functional position.

Claim 9 (original). A syringe assembly, comprising a syringe having a plunger and a barrel with a distal end, the needle cap assembly according to claim 5, a needle

held in said receiver and mounted, together with said receiver and said needle cap assembly, to said distal end of said barrel.

Claim 10 (original). The syringe assembly according to claim 9, wherein said distal end of said barrel is formed with a luer lock and said needle cap assembly and said needle together are formed to be mounted on said luer lock.

Claim 11 (previously presented). The protective cap assembly according to claim 3, wherein said receiver and said protective cap assembly are configured to define at least two functional positions in which said sharps element projects from said protective cap assembly by at least two different amounts.

Claim 12 (currently amended). In combination with a syringe device having a syringe-side luer lock, a needle and needle cap assembly, the assembly comprising:

a hypodermic needle with a needle-side luer lock configured to be attached to the syringe-side luer lock;

a receiver rigidly holding said hypodermic needle at said needle-side luer lock;

a protective cap mounted on said receiver and slidable ~~relative to~~ over said receiver between a closed position in which said protective cap encases said hypodermic needle completely and a functional position in which the hypodermic needle projects out of said protective cap; and

mutually cooperating locking devices on said protective cap and on said receiver for locking said protective cap in the closed position and at least one functional position.

Claim 13 (previously presented). The protective cap assembly according to claim 12, wherein said locking devices are configured to define at least two functional positions in which said hypodermic needle projects from said protective cap assembly by at least two different amounts.

Claim 14 (currently amended). The needle cap assembly according to claim 12, wherein said protective cap has a tip formed with an opening through which said needle projects in the functional position, and a membrane covering and substantially sealing said opening when the protective cap is in the closed position and the needle is completely retracted inside said cap, said membrane being formed of a material configured to close the opening after the needle is pulled back from a functional position to the closed position.

Claim 15 (previously presented). The needle cap assembly according to claim 12, which comprises a clip ring connected with said protective cap, and wherein said clip ring is configured to limit a movement of said receiver in one direction and said protective cap is configured to limit the movement of said receiver in another direction.